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Article

VOIP's Impact on Mail Machines

With new technology come unexpected challenges as older systems aren't always compatible with newer PHONE technology. Such is the situation faced by a number of mail machine users who download postage using an analog phone line to their mail machines.

A number of CMS customers have recently gone digital and switched to a VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) phone system. VIOP uses a digital signal that is converted to analog to work with legacy analog equipment (modems, fax, mail machine...) In some cases, the fax machines work just fine but the postage machine won't download postage using the same line. Why is this? It helps to understand some basic differences between the two types of equipment.

Simplistically, fax machines digitize a document and send it via the modem using packets. The information gets transmitted between devices and confidentiality and security is not an issue.

Mail machines on the other hand have modems that are 5 times faster than a fax machine. Because they transmit confidential information, the packets must arrive correctly and timely as the result is downloading postage from a bank account. The USPS mandated high security settings on the meter and resetting server ensure that this information is protected and quality communication is a must. If there is significant packet loss, the connection is terminated by the server. Fax machines and other devices are not held to these strict standards of communication. The bottom line is while a regular analog phone line (POTS -Plain Old Telephone Service) from the phone company can handle information high speed and high security data transmission, a digitally converted VOIP connection can sometime have difficulty.

Options

There are a number of options available to address this situation.

1. In some cases, the VIOP provider can adjust their transmission settings and increase the bandwidth to successfully complete meter download transactions.
(**NOTE:** CMS is not able to address this problem directly but we can assist you with your phone company if local technical support is available).
2. If the problem cannot be corrected, your company may need to consider maintaining a separate analog phone line for your mail machine to download postage.
3. Upgrade to different equipment. There are newer mail machines that now offer additional network connection capability, which will allow you to download postage via Ethernet connection rather than a phone connection.

Technological transitions can be frustrating, but upgrading to newer technology has other benefits that may be of interest. If you're looking to upgrade your mail machine, we can help evaluate your needs and identify a solution that fits your needs.

For more information, check out our website at www.comp-mail.com or contact us at **(303)761-0681**.